

Francis Preston Blair to Andrew Jackson, March 20, 1838, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

FRANCIS P. BLAIR TO JACKSON.

Washington, March 20, 1838.

My Dear General, Your letter of the 6th Inst. reached me on my way to the senate this morning. I intended showing it to Benton but I found him in the midst of a speech and in that part of it, for which your letter would have been necessary as a stimulant for other orators but not for him. He was just lashing Clay for his late attack on you. He read the extracts from Clay's speech and exposed the motives of it in such striking words and determined manner, that no one could have seen him without perceiving that it was a point on which he was ready to fight. Clay among other things, had said that you were unrelenting in your animosities and in the midst of Bentons reply the messenger put a letter on his table, which bearing your autograph, Benton held it up to the senate and said, without opening it, that the superscription itself was enough to silence the charge that you were a man of undying hate. I shall have the first part of the speech out tomorrow and will send you the Extra containing it. It will as a whole have a great effect on the country. Allen of Ohio,¹ has however delivered the most irresistable speech of the Session and his manner of delivering it was admirable. You will be delighted with it. He tells me he means when he goes home, to make the rounds of the State and deliver just such speeches in all the Congressional Districts. If he does he will carry the State by a large majority.

¹ William Allen, M. C. 1833–1835, senator 1837–1849.

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I have just read your paragraph to Buchanan about his Instructions. He tells me to say to you (confidentially) that you have anticipated his design. He has a Bill of three sections just to the point as put by you in his drawer which if the present Bill fails he means to offer. But he does not mean to speak of it lest it might operate injuriously to the present Bill. It is touch and go with the present Bill. I think it will be carried, but there is such a hidden current of corruption operating against it that it is almost impossible for me to credit the favorable professions of some, who are every way bound to vote for it.

My wife is sensible of the kind interest you take in her misfortune, and was so well when I read your letter to her that the little remains of the pain of the broken arm, was not equal to the pleasure she felt in the kind interest you took in it. She has got it out of the sling at last and begins to use it, yet she is not able to take the reins of the bridle in hand and make good her promise of conquering the unruly Horse. She is very proud of him as he behaved so well in your constitutional triumphal car on the last Inauguration day. . . .